

7.

Le Gouverneur général au secrétaire aux Dominions
Governor General to Dominions Secretary

PARAPHRASE OF TELEGRAM

Ottawa, June 30, 1926

PRIORITY. SECRET. As I have already informed you Mr. Mackenzie King asked me grant him a dissolution and I refused. Thereupon he resigned and I asked Mr. Meighen to form a Government which he has done. This constitutional or unconstitutional act of mine seems to resolve itself into these salient features. A Governor General has the absolute right of granting or of refusing a dissolution. A decision to refuse is a very dangerous one as it embodies the rejection of the advice of accredited Minister which is the bedrock of constitutional government. Therefore, in nine cases out of ten a Governor General should take the advice of the Prime Minister on this as on other matters. But if the Governor General considers the advice offered to be wrong and unfair and not for the welfare of the people it behoves him to act in what he considers the best interests of the country.

This is naturally the point of view I have taken and which I expressed in my reply to Mr. King. Text of reply is being telegraphed separately.

It will be observed that the letter in question is an acknowledgment of a letter from Mr. King (the text of which is also being telegraphed) appealing to me to consult the Imperial Government. While recognising to the full the help that this course might afford me, I flatly refused telling Mr. King that to ask advice from London, where Canadian conditions were not as well known as they were to me, was to put the British Government in the unfortunate position of having to offer a solution which might give the Canadian people that feeling of participation in their politics which is to be strongly deprecated.

It seems to me that there was one person and one alone who was responsible for decision and that person was myself. If the Imperial Government were involved I should feel that the relationship of the Dominion to the old country would be liable to be seriously jeopardized whereas any incompetent and unwise action of a Governor General can only involve himself.

I am glad to say that I was able to maintain a friendly feeling with my late Prime Minister to the end. I should have offered my resignation at once had it been otherwise. This point of view has been uppermost in my mind ever since Mr. King determined (against my private advice) on retaining office last November. It has not been always easy but it was imperative; a Governor General and a Prime Minister could not allow a difference of point of view to wreck their relationship without the greatest detriment to the country. Mr. King whose bitterness was very marked (? on Monday) will probably take a very vitriolic line against myself, that seems only natural. I have to await the verdict of history to prove that the course I adopted was a wrong one and this I do with an easy conscience convinced that whether right or wrong I